

Rymer, Edwina

From: Gray, David
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Texas, NM regulators detail concerns with EPA power plant rules
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By Mella McEwen | mmcewen@mrt.com | 0 comments

Regulators in Texas and New Mexico discussed Thursday the growing conflict between the federal and state governments.

Their focus at the kick-off breakfast for the Permian Basin Petroleum Association's annual meeting was power plant regulations proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency to cut greenhouse gas emissions from existing power generation plants by 30 percent. The target date is 2030.

Christi Craddick, chairman of the Texas Railroad Commission, said that under the proposed rule Texas will be expected to reduce carbon dioxide by about 38 percent. In actuality, it would be closer to 50 percent, she said.

Craddick said that 45 percent of the state's electricity baseload comes from coal-fired plants and it would not be possible to replace those plants with natural gas-fired generating plants. The agency regulates coal and uranium, as well as oil and gas and intrastate pipelines.

Ryan Flynn, secretary of the environment for the state of New Mexico, described the proposed regulations as a paradigm shift that would allow the federal government to regulate not only how electricity is generated but how consumers use that electricity over the next few decades.

He scoffed at the EPA's finding that the rules would result in minimal increases in energy costs and result in the loss of 75,000 jobs. Those losses would be offset by gains in jobs in the clean energy sector and by mitigating global climate change, Flynn said.

He cited U.S. Chamber of Commerce findings that the rules would result in 225,000 jobs lost and an annual loss of \$50 billion to the gross domestic product. He also cited findings that the 30 percent reduction from the U.S. would result in only a 0.018 degree Celsius difference in temperature.

States need to be aggressive in dictating the outcome of disputes with the EPA, or they will have little leverage in the dispute, Flynn said.

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